Rye Conservation Commission
September 2026
Rye Civic League Notes

Sept. 1 Swallows Meeting Presentation Draft Minutes
Sept. 1 Meeting Video Streaming
Sept. 10 Meeting Draft Minutes
Sept 10 Meeting Video Streaming

Highlights

1. Chair Shawn Joyce has resigned from the Conservation Commission
2. Observations and report by NH Audborn indicate 11 Goss Farm successful nests and about fifty chicks have been raised, exact prior population not known but estimated at 20-25 pairs
3. Rye NH Trails website is live here

Sept 1 Swallows Meeting Presentation

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The Commission updated the public regarding their work with the swallows at Goss Farm

After voting to close the barn the Commission erected alternative nesting structures at a cost of: Shed - $1,900 Umbrella - $650 to $700 Pavilions (2x) - $1,400 to $1,500.

Based on observations, “there were a total of eleven successful nests in the new structures with over three different designs and five different nesting types. Over fifty chicks have been raised this season. It is unknown what the population was prior to the barn closure.”

“More information about the shelter designs can be found on the RCC’s page, along with a report by Pamela Hunt, Ph.D., NH Audubon, evaluating the success of the nesting structures erected by the Commission as a mitigation measure for the closure of the Goss Farm Barn.”

For 2027 the structures will be modified and signs erected earlier in the season.

There was public comment as follows:

Ritchie White, 30 Lang Road, commented that he wishes this presentation could have been shown at the Deliberative Session. He wishes the town's people could see the effort the RCC putin and what a success this project has been. Clearly, the Commission went above and beyond with all the volunteer time and work that was done. He thanked RCC for their efforts.

Shawn Fraim, 47 Old Beach Road, asked when the fledglings will head south. She also asked what will happen to the barn when the swallows return next season.
Member Terhune explained that the chicks stick around about a week or two after they fledge. The first group left about two to four weeks ago. A lot of them are now gathering in various places, such as Plum Island, for the flight south. With respect to the barn next season, Vice-Chair Odryna pointed out that there are fifty new swallows that have the new structures, which should help. It will be about three years for a complete transition out of the barn.

Suzanne Barton, 114 Clark Road, applauded RCC on their efforts. She noted that the presentation was professional and informational. She thinks how they promote information and action steps is important. She recommends that the RCC use the communication approach they used at this meeting going forward.

Karen Oliver, 1159 Washington Road, read an email from Pamela Hunt as a follow up to her evaluation of the relocation of the barn swallows from the barn at Goss Farm. Ms. Hunt wrote that their key finding is that supplementary structures provide habitat for barn swallow pairs in the short term, but this is no guarantee that this success will continue. The key recommendation is to monitor populations in the future to understand whether supplemental structures are adequate.

Tom King, 535 Wallis Road, reiterated that Mara Silver has said that this is a multi-year process. He pointed out that this is a long-term project. A true scientific experiment will need to be set up. He hopes that there will continue to be success.

Michelle Tyminski, 121 Parsons Road, noted that the most successful structure seems to be the shed. She asked if there are intentions to build more sheds to bring up the volume of the nests for next year.
Vice-Chair Odryna explained that if skirts are put on the sides of the pavilions, they start to become just like the sheds. The intent is to try a couple of different options for the pavilions for next season. He pointed out that the sheds got early use because they were in place first.

Scott Marion, 71 Washington Road, noted that the Conservation Commission made a decision to close the barn, which he opposed. He appreciates the amount of work that was put into this. He also appreciates the design build mindset. He encouraged the RCC to think about the criteriafor success, as there needs to be more data. Any good science is based on long-term studies.

Frank Drake, South Road, pointed out that no one knows exactly how this is going to turn out. He noted that there won't be years of successful data analysis, if the project doesn't keep going. He thinks this has been positive for the swallows, as well as the people.Vice-Chair Odryna stated that this is an opportunity for the entire community and the species. He would like to see the project continue.

Howard Kalet, 90 Colbourn Road, commented this is a great piece of work. He looks forward to the continued work and progress next year.

Sept 10 Meeting

There were no wetlands applications

Firms presented proposals for vernal pool mapping.

The RCC voted to recommend a budget of $93,800 for 2027

Recommendations for the alternate Goss Farm swallows nesting structures based on the NH Audubon report are planned before snowfall.

Trails Update
As trails are now reopened by town vote, the RCC voted to ask for a legal analysis of what rights the Town may have over Pasture Lane for access from Washington Road to the newly reopened Whitehorse Green Trail.

A total of $4,417 was approved for payment for Rye Trails postcard mailing and Rye NH Trails website work.

Town Forest Survey Plan Update
The survey of the boundary between Town Forest and Cemetery is complete and it was voted to instruct that it be recorded.

Airfield Development

The proposed development may impact existing, “allowed” by easement, parking for the trails in that area. The RCC will continue to follow.

Hunting Signs
Signs will be posted at properties where hunting is allowed with advice to wear orange and a QR code for further info.

Public Comments

Lisa Jacobus, 39 Pine Street, commented that there are a lot of people in town who are willing to help clean the trails and put them back together.
Vice-Chair Odryna replied that anyone wanting to help should send an email to Land UseAssistant Kara Campbell and they will be added to the list.
Ms. Jacobus stated that she liked the comment about utilizing students for the barn swallows.She asked if there may be an opportunity to do this with the vernal pools with regard to the data collection. She also asked about grants that may be available for the project. Ms. Jacobus pointed out that she had questions about the presentations that were given at this meeting. She asked how the questions can be asked and addressed before a decision is made by the RCC. She also asked how the vernal pool information will be used.
Chair Joyce replied that this work has been needed for many years. Had this work been done, there may have been a different outcome for the trails, as they may have been put in places where they shouldn’t be. It’s extremely important to map the vernal pools.
Vice-Chair Odryna pointed out that the RCC is bringing in experts who can answer the questions. They’re helping to find places that need to be protected, not just doing mapping in general.

Cassandra Raynes, 24 Fairhill Ave., suggested that the vernal pool mapping be done in the areas where hunting is allowed. She also suggested it be done in areas for new developments. Vice-Chair Odryna explained that the properties that are under conservation are far greater than just the ones with trails. The cost would be a lot more to do all properties. That is why the project will be focused on certain areas. He further explained that developers are required to map wetlands and vernal pools. They come to the RCC with that information when doing their projects and that is how those are protected.

Sally King, 535 Wallis Road, asked where the money is coming from for the vernal pool project. She agreed that the work is very important. However, it was mentioned that the funds are going to come from the Brown Lane Farm vernal pool fund, which is not allowed. She noted that all the relevant documentation has been provided to the RCC

that says those funds are solely for Brown Lane Farm. She agreed to forward that information to the Rye Conservation Commission again.

Tom King, 535 Wallis Road, pointed out that historically, many volunteers have helped maintain the trails, Goss Farm, and other properties. A lot of times power tools and equipment have been used. Referring to the Goss Farm, he commented that it's been said by members of the Commission that volunteers shouldn't be allowed to perform "dangerous activities" such as cleaning the Goss Barn due to liability concerns. He encouraged the RCC to examine whether some of their other projects, such as alternative structure construction, cleaning and modifications, which involve being on a ladder, use of power equipment for property and trail maintenance, and hauling heavy beams to replace the bog bridges, are suitable for volunteers.

He doesn't expect to see anybody on a ladder without straps, helmets and harnesses when building the alternative structures. The RCC has to set the rules to protect the Town. Maybe volunteers shouldn't get out there to clear the trails with a chainsaw. He asked that the Town be protected, even if there are costs to get the work done.

Suzanne Barton, 114 Clark Road, commented that the Town has become so liability focused hat it's taken the joy out of living. She suggested a simple release of liability form for people who want to help. Ms. Barton also spoke in support of using good quality signage for the hunting signs.

Susan Shepcaro, 45 Recreation Road, spoke about the calls she has received from residents about the lack of dog waste bags in the boxes at the trails. She noted that it's relatively easy to keep them full and is usually the responsibility of someone on the Commission.

Referring to Ms. Shepcaro's comment, **Karen Stewart, 546 Washington Road,** stated that it's been suggested to her that it's an intentional move by this RCC to increase the amount of dog waste on the trails so the dogs can be eliminated from walking the trails.

Truman Cavallaro, 6 Random Road, noted his credentials as a certified wetland scientist with an extensive background in vernal pool work. He agreed to speak further with RCC about the vernal pool mapping project.

Bob McGrath, 6 Rands Lane, thanked each member of the RCC for their service to the Town of Rye. For the past several months, the RCC has had to make difficult decisions on issues that generated tremendous emotion and disagreement in the community. The RCC didn't alwaysmake decisions that everyone agreed with, which is the nature of

public service. However, he saw a group of people who listened to professionals, considered the information available to them, did their jobs and stayed the course. When the criticism became personal, the Commission didn't quit. When people tried to distract the RCC from their responsibilities, they didn't get distracted. When RCC was criticized simply because people didn't agree with the decisions,
they didn't fire back. The Commission kept showing up and trying to do what they felt was right for the Town of Rye. RCC's accomplishments went far beyond the controversy that has received so much attention. Structure and accountability has been brought to this commission. The Commission has brought financial clarity and made responsible decisions on how the taxpayers' dollars should be spent. Protecting Rye's resources means not only protecting the land but the taxpayers who fund that work. He is embarrassed by the way some members of the RCC have been treated by fellow residents. People have the right to disagree and argue for a different
approach. However, volunteering for a town should never mean accepting personal attacks and character assassinations because someone disagrees. Mr. McGrath pointed out there are people in town who appreciate the work of the RCC.

Mark Josephs, 540 Washington Road, asked if there are plans to put back the bog bridges that have been removed along the trails.
Chair Joyce noted that the bog bridges from the Jim Raynes Forest will be put back. RCC hasn't touched the others.
It was noted that the bridges in the Town Forest need repair. RCC agreed to review those bridges.

Kate Steiner, 520 Washington Road, asked why vernal pools on protected land are being studied at such an expense to the Town. Referring to the budget, she would like to see more detail in the budget and how the expenditures will be implemented. She would like to hear the Commission's vision of how the budget will be used in 2027.

Joann Hodgdon, 63 Cable Road, spoke about the lack of respect from the citizens towards people serving on boards, committees and commissions.